

## BREASTFEEDING IN THE FIRST WEEKS

### Learning about breastfeeding

- Talk to other women who have breastfed. Take a breastfeeding class, read books or pamphlets.
- Having a new baby is a big change in your life whether you breastfeed or not. Breastfeeding and baby care become easier with practice and experience.

### Beginning to breastfeed

- Breastfeed as soon as possible after birth. Your baby will welcome the comfort of your arms and the chance to breastfeed.
- Hold your undressed baby next to your bare skin.
- Keep your baby with you in your hospital room so you can breastfeed every 1 1/2 to 3 hours.
- Before going home, ask a nurse to watch an entire feeding to make sure your baby is getting breastmilk.

### Breastfeed your baby often

Breastfeed every 1 1/2 to 3 hours, or 8 to 12 times in 24 hours. Your baby needs your first milk (colostrum) before your milk becomes abundant. Breastfeed often so your body knows to make enough milk. Your breasts do not need to “rest” or “fill up” between feedings. You are always making milk!

### Breastfeed when your baby first shows signs of hunger

Babies let you know they are hungry by:

- sucking on his or her hands; lip smacking,
- rooting — turning his head sideways with mouth open,
- fussing.

If your baby is crying, a late sign of hunger, calm him before trying to breastfeed.



### Use a good feeding position

Turn your baby's face, tummy and knees toward you. Bring baby's chest close to your chest. Your nipple should be right at baby's mouth. Use a pillow for support.

### Watch for a good latch on

Support your breast. Lightly touch your baby's lips with your nipple. Baby needs to open his mouth wide, like a big yawn. Quickly, bring baby's body very close to yours. About an inch of the darker skin around the nipple needs to be in your baby's mouth. Your baby is latched on and beginning to suck. Baby's nose and chin should touch your breast. Baby's lips should be curled out, not tucked in. Sometimes it takes several tries to latch on well. If your baby acts hungry after the second breast, offer the first breast again. *If breastfeeding hurts, call a breastfeeding specialist or your doctor.*

### Ending the feeding

Let your baby end the feeding, after about 20 to 30 minutes. Your baby will let go or fall asleep when he is no longer hungry. He will look very content.

### Avoid using bottles or pacifiers

Artificial nipples, if used in the early weeks, can confuse your baby and cause your milk supply to decrease. Breastfed newborns don't need water, sugar water or formula.

### Stay committed to breastfeeding

